G. R. S. 59]

GENERAL AND REVENUE SECRETARIAT.

(19P)

(1912 S. R)

File No. 104—12

Serial Nos. 1—3

Papers Filed.

Month March 13

SUBJECT.

Regulation of opium Consumption in British India

PREVIOUS REFERENCES

LATER REFERENCES

G.R.S. 11] 1912.– 13

GENERAL AND REVENUE SECRETARIAT.

(L. 17.)

NOTES.

File No. 104-12

FILE HEADING.

Revocation of Opium Consumption Co. [illegible] British India.

From The Secretary to the Government of India

No. 611 Dated 18-10-1912 Received [illegible]

Diary No. [illegible]	Enclos. 2 Spare Copies.	Serial No. 1

BRIEF ABSTRACT OF LETTER.

Forwarding for the information of the Local Govt. a copy of the [illegible] of the U.S.A. [illegible] on the subject noted above.

NOTES AND ORDERS.

NOTES—First Sheet.

GPB—80,000—12-6-11

P. T. O.

C 1064—12

2

G.R.S. 13]

Routine Notes ~~D1446~~

[To be used only for notes, requisitions, etc., not intended for permanent record.]

Govt of India's Resolu: on the consumption of opium in Br India.

No action is perhaps necessary in this case. The paper is held for perusal.

M
.83
6/12/12

Send this to the Excise Comm[r] for perusal and return.

13/12/12

Drafted.
M 83
14/12/12

N. B.—Should routine notes be written on small slips, the notes must be copied or slips pasted on this form.

GPB—25,000—23-7-12

3

F. R. S. 12]

General and Revenue Secretariat.

S.G. File No. 104 of 1912-13

Serial No.	
2	To The Excise Commissioner in Mysore No. I.E. 3542 & 27. 12. 1912 Forwards the Govt. Order in the communication noted.
3	From The Excise Commissioner in Mysore No. 7009 dated the 12th March 1913 Returns the copies of the Resolutions[x] of the Govt. of Travia in question. This may now be filed Submd. S.G. Asst. 17/3/1913

S/12
19/3

NOTE—Contn. sheet.

GPB—65,000—17-6-12

II
1/10

Pol No 619 of 18/10/12

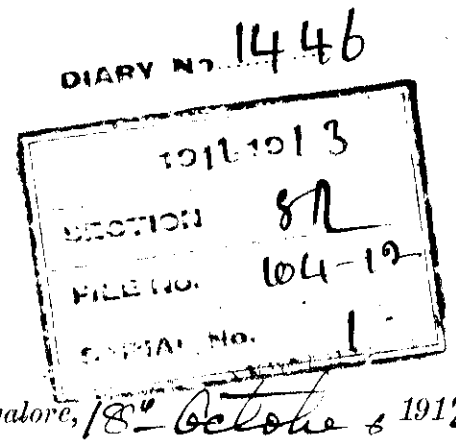
No. 6141
2

From

P. B. WARBURTON, Esq., I. C. S.,
FIRST ASSISTANT TO THE RESIDENT IN MYSORE.

To

The Dewan of Mysore.



Dated Bangalore, 18th October 1912

Sir,

I am directed to forward herewith, for the information of the Durbar, a copy of the *communications noted on the margin, dealing with the subject of the regulation of opium consumption in British India.

* Resolution of the Govt. of India in the Finance Department No. 533 F.E., dated the 19th August 1912.

Letter from the Govt. of India in the Finance Dept. No. 534 F.E., dated the 19th August 1912.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

PBWarburton

First Assistant Resident.

R. O 2.—R. P. B.—9-1912.—1,000.

2

G.R.S. 26]

File No. 1472

Serial No. 2

Diary No. of letter replied to 1446

No. 3542

27-12-12

General and Revenue Secretariat

( )

, the *19* .

To

The Excise Commissioner.

of issue 27-12-12

Signed by W Hirinyamuch

Sir,

I am directed to forward herewith for perusal and kind return this Resolution of the Govt of India No 5337-E. dated the 4th August 1912 on the subject of regulation of opium consumption in British India.

I have etc

for Secy to Govt

63 Abn

14/1/13

SUBJECT.

over.

copy
7/1/13

SR No 1

(3)

OFFICE OF THE EXCISE COMMISSIONER IN MYSORE.

7 copy

Bangalore, dated 13th March ..... 1915.

FROM

V. Lantaraj Urs, Esq., B.A.,

Excise Commissioner in Mysore.

To

P.R. Srinivasiengar, Esq., M.A.,

Offg: *Secretary to the Government of*
His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore,
General and Revenue Departments.

DAIRY No. 3558

1912-1913
SECTION SR
FILE No. 104
ITEM No. 3

Sir,

In reply to your letter No.Fl.3542/G.R.104-1s-2 dated the 17th December 1914, I have the honor to return herewith, the copies of the Resolutions of the Government of India Nos.533 and 534 dated the 19th August 1915, referred to therein.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

/Illegible

for Excise Commissioner.

No. 533-F. E.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT.

SEPARATE REVENUE.
Opium.

RESOLUTION.

Simla, the 14th August 1912.

The Resolutions adopted by the International Opium Commission which met at Shanghai in 1909 embodied certain important recommendations regarding the principles to be kept in view, and the measures to be taken by, the various participating countries in connection with their internal opium administration. The Resolutions in question were as follows:—

Resolution No. 2.—"That in view of the action taken by the Government of China in suppressing the practice of opium smoking, and by other Governments to the same end, the International Opium Commission recommends that each delegation concerned move its own Government to take measures for the gradual suppression of the practice of opium smoking in its own territories and possessions, with due regard to the varying circumstances of each country concerned."

Resolution No. 3.—"That the International Opium Commission finds that the use of opium in any form otherwise than for medical purposes is held by almost every participating country to be a matter for prohibition or for careful regulation, and that each country in the administration of its system of regulation, purports to be aiming, as opportunity offers, at progressively increasing stringency. In recording these conclusions the International Opium Commission recognises the wide variations between the conditions prevailing in the different countries, but it would urge on the attention of the Governments concerned the desirability of a re-examination of their systems of regulation in the light of the experience of other countries dealing with the same problem."

The principle of these recommendations has been cordially accepted by the Governor General in Council. It is indeed the principle that has always guided the action of Government of India, and their control over the employment of opium in this country has been marked by increasing vigilance and increasing strictness. They welcome however the present opportunity of bringing under review the whole field of their internal opium arrangements, and having re-examined, in consultation with Local Governments, the details of existing regulations, they are now in a position to indicate the general lines on which they consider it possible to increase the strictness of their control.

2. It has long been recognised, and it cannot be too clearly understood, that in India opium smoking stands on a very different footing from opium eating. Opium smoking is uniformly reprobated by public opinion; it is rarely resorted to for *quasi*-medical purposes; it is generally indulged in as a social vice; and the danger of its contagion, when practised in public, furnishes strong justification for adopting measures which approach as nearly as is practicable to total prohibition. On the other hand the practice of opium eating as it exists in India has little or no connection with what is generally known as the "opium habit". As was pointed out by the Royal Commission which reported in 1895, opium eating as a vice scarcely exists in India. That Commission found that opium in this country is extensively used for non-medical and *quasi*-medical purposes, that the non-medical uses are interwoven with the medical uses, that it would not be practicable to draw a distinction between them in the distribution and sale of the drug, and that it is not necessary that the growth of poppy and the manufacture and sale of opium in British India should be prohibited for all except medical purposes. Opium as taken in moderation by the average Indian

is eaten either as a mild stimulant, or as a prophylactic against malaria, or for the relief of pain or in the treatment of diabetes. It is in fact a household remedy for many ills, and it is safe to say that as a national habit the eating of opium is less injurious than is the consumption of alcohol in many other countries. Centuries of inherited experience have taught the people of India discretion in the use of the drug, and its misuse is a negligible feature in Indian life. These conclusions were accepted by the Shanghai Commission, who, while they recommended the gradual suppression of the practice of opium smoking, refrained from advising the abandonment of the policy of regulation by which the practice of opium eating in this country has hitherto been successfully kept under restraint.

3. Under the existing law opium smoking is subject to very severe restrictions. The sale of smoking preparations of opium is absolutely prohibited throughout India proper, while their private manufacture is only allowed to the smoker himself, or, on his behalf, from opium lawfully in his possession, and, generally speaking, only to the extent of one tola at a time. The quantity of opium daily used by an opium smoker is so large in comparison to that used by an opium eater, and the inconvenience and difficulty involved in the repeated preparation for smoking are so great, that these restrictions hardly fall short of legal prohibition. After careful consideration, however, of the replies of Local Governments the Government of India have come to the conclusion that the time is ripe for taking further steps in the direction of direct and unqualified prohibition. They consider, that is to say, that it is desirable to suppress all public gatherings for the purpose of smoking opium, whether they are called saloons, clubs or social assemblies, or by any other name whatever, and to prohibit all manufacture of opium smoking preparations save by an individual of a small quantity for his own private consumption. They consider that this prohibition should apply to the whole of British India, including Burma, and they will invite Local Governments which have, or will have, Legislative Councils to introduce legislation with this object while for areas without Legislative Councils a similar measure will be introduced into the Imperial Council.

4. The Government of India have no desire to dictate to Legislative Councils the exact form which legislation should take, but it should, they think, be provided that an assembly of three or more persons for the purpose of smoking opium should be declared illegal, no exception being made in favour of members of the same family, and that the presence of opium smoking pipes or other apparatus, or of any quantity of smoking preparations, either singly or in combination, should be held sufficient to raise the presumption of an intention to smoke opium. They further consider that the working of such legislation should be entrusted, wherever possible, to excise officials rather than to the police.

5. The maximum limit of private possession of opium smoking preparations will be determined for each province by its Local Government with due regard to local circumstances. The limit at present is three tolas in Burma, where the smoking preparations in use are *beinsi* and *beinchi* ; it has recently been reduced in Madras to half a tola or 90 grains ; in the rest of the provinces it is a tola or 180 grains ; and the Bombay Government have suggested as low a limit as 45 grains. The Madras limit of half a tola will probably be found sufficient for most provinces. The Government of India do not desire to restrict the discretion of Local Governments in the matter, but they consider that a daily dose as required by an ordinary consumer should be the maximum limit of possession. The question of fixing a limit for the collective possession of opium smoking preparations does not arise, as collective smoking by 3 or more persons is to be prohibited, but it may be desirable to lay down that the limit of possession by two individuals will be double the quantity allowed for one, with the proviso that where this quantity is exceeded each of the two individuals will be held guilty of possessing an amount in excess of the lawful limit. While the Government of India are anxious to make the prohibition against collective opium smoking effective, they recognise the difficulties and dangers that beset any attempt to interfere with the private habits of any portion of the population, and they do not desire that any interference with the private practice of opium smoking by single individuals should be undertaken. Such interference would, they think, open the door to inquisitorial proceedings, and offer very little chance of real success.

6. The foregoing remarks relate to the policy of absolute prohibition which the Government of India have always entertained as their ideal in the matter of opium smoking. They have re-examined also their policy of regulation of opium eating, and have given their most careful consideration to all practicable proposals for preventing its misuse. One reform which has been suggested is the introduction of a system of official vend, under which the retail sale of opium would be conducted by salaried vendors who would have no interest in forcing sales. Such a system already obtains, to all intents and purposes, in Burma, where special circumstances, such as the history of the province and the characteristics of its people, have necessitated the adoption of special measures. After careful consideration the Government of India feel unable to recommend any system of official sale either absolutely in Burma, or to any extent in the other provinces. They consider that it would be a retrograde step to associate Government so closely with the retail vend of opium, and they see no sufficient reason to interfere with the existing systems which have so far been found to work well.

7. The Government of India have also had under their consideration the question of the price at which opium should be issued from the Government treasuries. This is a most important matter, as the issue price is the chief factor in determining the price at which opium is sold to the public by the retail trade. It has recently been examined by the majority of Local Governments and the scale of issue prices has been raised wherever the local circumstances permitted. It is possible however that some further enhancement may be effected, the principle to be observed being that the price of opium should be so fixed as to make its consumption a luxury, and the Government of India will favourably consider any further proposals directed to this end. The equalisation of prices has also to be considered. Hitherto certain factors, such as the presence of opium cultivation or a high or low rate of consumption in the district affected, have been held to necessitate differential treatment of particular areas in the fixation of issue prices. But it is desirable to have these principles thoroughly examined, and Local Governments will be addressed on the subject, with a view to the adoption of such measures as are possible to ensure uniformity in contiguous areas administered from different centres, and to minimise the risk of smuggling from cheap-level areas to those in which the prices are high.

8. The advisability of reducing the legal limit of private possession of opium is another question to be borne in mind at every re-examination of opium regulations. This limit is at present three tolas in the majority of provinces. Where it is higher, suitable reductions are being made in consultation with Local Governments. The limit in Madras has already been reduced from three tolas to one tola, and in the Central Provinces it is being reduced from three tolas to two tolas.

9. Among the minor reforms suggested, and in some provinces already carried out, are a reduction in the number of opium retail shops, a further restriction of the hours of sale, and the raising of the purchaser's minimum age below which sale is not permissible. These are all within the competence of Local Governments, and have duly been considered by them. They are matters concerning which the decision must vary with local circumstances, and the Government of India have no desire to elaborate any hard and fast rules governing them.

10. The urgent necessity of a self-contained body of rules relating to morphia and allied opium compounds has also been brought to the notice of the Government of India, and stress has been laid on the desirability of their unification for the whole of British India (including Burma). At present the regulations which apply to morphia and allied compounds are scattered through the Opium or Excise Manuals of the different provinces. They are not in all cases clear, and they are not easy to consult, as provisions about ordinary opium or smoking preparations of opium are mixed up with the provisions about morphia and allied compounds, although the provisions in the case of all these forms of opium tend to diverge more and more every day. Again the diversity in the morphia rules from province to province is often purely accidental, and, while it is a source of weakness to the administration, it supplies loop-holes for smugglers and criminals. In the case of

a drug like morphia there are no special local conditions to be allowed for, and the Government of India think that unified rules for the whole of British India will be both easier for officials to enforce and simpler for the people to understand. They will be glad, therefore, if Local Governments will bring together their rules about morphia and allied compounds in a self-contained form, examine them with a view to such amendment in the direction of greater stringency as may be considered suitable, and then forward them to the Government of India for final unification.

Ordered that a copy of the Resolution be sent to all Local Governments and Administrations.

Ordered that the Resolution be published in the *Gazette of India*.

H. F. HOWARD,

Officiating Secretary to the Government of India.

G. C. B. P., Simla.—No. 99 Fin. D.—20-8-12.—1,000.—F.C.A.

No. 534-F.E.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT.

SEPARATE REVENUE.
Opium.

FROM

THE HONOURABLE MR. H. F. HOWARD, I.C.S.,
OFFICIATING SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,

TO

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS, REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY, REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL, FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED PROVINCES, SEPARATE REVENUE (OPIUM) DEPARTMENT.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB.

THE REVENUE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BURMA.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR AND ORISSA.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF ASSAM.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER AND AGENT TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL, NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF AJMER-MERWARA.

THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF COORG.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF BALUCHISTAN.

Simla, the 19th August 1912.

SIR,

I AM directed to refer to the correspondence ending with

your letter { No. 3495, dated 4th November 1910 / No. 4662, dated 15th May 1911 / No. 152-T.S.R., dated 13th June 1911 / No. 74-XIII-150, dated 4th February 1911 / No. 1636-S(Rev.), dated 8th August 1910 / No. 391-3-O.-13, dated 22nd August 1910 } and to refer to with { Mr. Wheeler's letter No. 152-T.S.R., dated 13th June 1911 / Mr. Kershaw's letter No. 496-F., dated 13th January 1911 } with your letter { No. 213-XV-7-10, dated 27th July 1910 / No. 878-Exc., dated 8th October 1910 / No 1407-R., dated 5th June 1910 / No. 3400 R., dated 12th October 1910 } the Resolution of the Government of India in the Finance Department, No. 533-F. E., dated the 19th August 1912, on the subject of the regulation of opium consumption in British India. I am to request that, with the permission of His Excellency the Governor in Council / His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, the Resolution may be re-published in the Local Government Gazette for general information.

2. The general policy which the Government of India desire to see followed in this matter is set forth in the Resolution. I am now to convey more detailed observations regarding certain points that have arisen during the course of the examination of the question.

3. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Resolution, the Government of India attach great importance to the question of fixing the level of the issue prices of opium on some definite principles which can be recognised and acted upon by all Local Governments and Administrations. Absolute uniformity in prices throughout India is of course not practicable, but it is not improbable that detailed enquiry will show that the existing divergence in this respect between different provinces and between different areas within the same province is larger than is warranted by variations in local conditions. The result of this diversity is that the differences in retail prices are sufficient to stimulate smuggling and defeat the object of raising the treasury price of opium in particular areas. It is not clear whether, and to what extent, the same principles have guided all Local Governments in fixing issue prices. It has been suggested that the Government of India should appoint a small committee of experts for India as a whole, to examine the question in consultation with Local Governments and to recommend uniform principles for adoption throughout the country. The Government of India consider, however, that the appointment of such a committee is unnecessary and that it will be preferable that the question should be examined in each province by the Local Government, and the results reported; they will then be in a position to collate the facts and opinions elicited and to formulate general principles for guidance.

4. In the past, Local Governments in fixing issue prices appear to have been guided in the main by three considerations, namely, that—

(*i*) they should ordinarily be low in districts in which the poppy is grown; and

(*ii*) they should, when possible, be raised in districts in which the consumption of opium is high; but

(*iii*) it may be necessary to depart from these principles in cases in which their adoption would involve a large divergence in price from that prevailing in adjacent areas administered from another centre.

5. The object of the maintenance of a low level of prices in districts in which the poppy is grown has been to minimise the inducement to cultivators to keep back part of their produce for illicit sale. It is somewhat doubtful whether undue importance has not been attached to this consideration. It is probable that the consumption of licit opium in such districts will always be relatively low in spite of the low price of issue, and that no reasonable lowering of the price will materially affect this result. The greater part of the opium kept back is usually for private consumption, and not for sale, as the ordinary cultivator has no organised means for eluding the vigilance of police and preventive officers. Moreover, it is easy to discriminate between the crude opium

obtained from a cultivator and excise opium, whereas this is not the case with excise opium smuggled from one district to another, so long as the source of supply for the two districts is the same. Again, the poppy-growing areas in British India have been greatly restricted, and are now practically confined to the United Provinces, and it is probably safe to allow less weight to this factor in the fixation of issue prices in the future than has been given to it in the past.

6. The principle of raising issue prices to check consumption is of course theoretically correct. It is obvious, however, that its adoption may have undesirable consequences, if it results in the consumer being driven to the use of more deleterious drugs, or if it involves a substantial divergence in prices in neighbouring areas. Thus two neighbouring districts may show very different rates of consumption per head. In districts which are malarious, or where races or castes which habitually take opium predominate, the consumption will naturally be high ; but the raising of the issue price in such cases will necessarily tend to stimulate illicit imports from districts in which a low consumption or other considerations are held to justify a lower issue price for opium. It must also be remembered that with every improvement in communications the question of distance becomes of less importance.

7. It has, in fact, as has already been explained, been found impossible to adhere to these principles in all cases owing to apprehensions of smuggling from adjacent areas, either in British territory administered by another Local Government, or in protected States where the excise arrangements for opium do not correspond with those in force in British India. In order to obviate the necessity of fixing prices at an unduly low level in areas so situated, it is clear that an attempt should be made to attain a general uniformity, and that a departure from such uniformity can only be justified by very strong and special reasons. When a difference exists in prices between two areas in British territory, there should be no difficulty in arriving at uniformity after consultation. It may be the case that considerations of poppy cultivation or excessive consumption on one side of the border may be thought to justify a low or high issue price, while on the other side the position may be reversed. In such a case it would obviously be impossible to reconcile the conflicting interests involved, and the Government of India are of opinion that the principle of uniformity is of such importance that it should be the chief factor to be considered in arriving at a decision. Any other course must place an irresistible temptation in the way of smugglers, whose operations will also be facilitated by the difference of jurisdiction. Where the territory on one side is not under direct British control, the position is more difficult and must be dealt with in each case on its merits. In British Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province, and possibly also in some tracts in the Punjab on the external frontiers of India much caution will be required in raising issue prices ; but with a proper level of import duties on, or prohibition of, foreign opium and the strengthening of the preventive staff, it should be possible gradually to raise the level of prices to a sufficient extent to ensure that an excessive disparity in retail prices may not set smuggling in motion between these frontier areas and the interior of British India. With Feudatory States in the interior it should be possible to enter into arrangements to secure uniformity of prices on both sides of the border. In this matter the revenue interests of the States concerned are identical with those of British India and there is every probability that they will welcome an invitation to co-operate.

8. I am to invite your attention to these and other questions which may arise in the course of the enquiry now suggested, and to ask that the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council / His Honour the Lieutenant Governor / your opinion may be communicated to the Government of India. I am to request that, in addition, a statement may be submitted to show the exact issue prices in the different areas in the province and bordering on it, (retail prices in the case of non-British territory), together with specific proposals for meeting any border difficulties. It will necessarily take some time before the enquiry is completed and orders are passed on it by the Government of India, and I am to suggest therefore that any obvious reforms in the direction of raising issue prices in specific areas should not meanwhile be postponed. [The prices in Patna and Tirhut Divisions may, for example, be raised at once.] [To Bihar and Orissa only.]

9. Without in any way wishing to restrict the scope of the enquiry, the Government of India suggest that it should be directed on the following lines:—

(1) Is it desirable and practicable to fix a standard for the issue price of opium throughout India (not including Burma), any deviations from that standard to be justified by special local considerations? If so, what should be that standard, or how should it be arrived at?

(2) If the standard for all India (not including Burma) is not practicable, is one such standard practicable for each province, and what should it be? [What should be the standard for Burma?]

[To Burma only.]

(3) What are the circumstances which may properly be held to justify deviation from such a standard? Can the justifiable deviation be expressed in a quantitative formula? If not, what relative importance should be attached to the various circumstances held to justify deviation?

(4) Should the issue price of opium have any relation to the retail price of hemp drugs? How is the link to be established? Is it practicable to prescribe a minimum retail price of hemp drugs, (in order to prevent the displacement of opium by more harmful drugs)?

[To be sent as paragraphs 10 to 12 to Bombay.]

10. I am further to say that the Government of India approve of the suggestion made in paragraph 5 of your letter of the 15th May 1911, to reduce the limit of possession by an individual of opium smoking preparations to $\frac{1}{4}$th of a tola, and by two individuals to half a tola, with the proviso that if two individuals are found with more than half a tola, each of them should be deemed to have committed an offence. It will be seen from the Resolution that the Government of India are of opinion that a meeting of three or more persons for the purpose of smoking opium should be made illegal, and I am to suggest that, if His Excellency in Council has no objection, draft rule 2 of the notification enclosed with your letter be amended accordingly.

11. In paragraph 6 of your letter you mention the proposal that the limit of private possession of opium should be reduced from three tolas to one tola in the Bombay Presidency except in the desert Talukas of Thar and Parkar in Sind, where it should be reduced from ten tolas to four tolas. It is stated that this proposal has the entire approval of the Governor in Council, and I am to convey the sanction of the Government of India to the publication of draft rules (1), (3) and (4) of the notification enclosed with your letter.

12. The question of rendering effective a prohibition under section 19 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878, of the export of opium, its derivatives and bye-products, to all countries which forbid their import, has been held over pending the ratification of the recommendations of the Hague Conference.

[To be sent as paragraphs 10 to 12 to Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.]

10. With regard to the reduction of the limit of private possession of opium smoking preparations, I am to refer to what is said on the subject in paragraph 5 of the Resolution. The Government of India will be glad if the Government of Bengal can see their way to reduce the limit to half a tola. In any case, the limit of possession by two persons should be defined, with the proviso suggested in paragraph 5 of the Resolution.

11. In paragraph 13 of Mr. Wheeler's letter, is quoted the view of the Commissioner of Excise who says that the officers consulted are almost unanimously of opinion that the limit of possession of opium should be reduced from five tolas to three tolas. The Board of Revenue endorse this opinion, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council accepts it, subject to the condition that the reduction should only operate where there is at least one shop open to every 100 square miles. The Government of India doubt whether such a proviso is desirable or practicable. It is, they think, advisable to have the same limit of private possession in at least the same district, if not in the whole province or in areas larger than a province. Further, the distribution of shops is liable to alteration from year to year, and it is not desirable to vary the limit of private possession in the same locality with a change in the allocation of shops. I am to request,

therefore, that the desirability of making the reduction to three tolas unconditionally throughout the province may be reconsidered.

12. The question of rendering effective a prohibition under section 19 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878, of the export of opium, its derivatives, and bye-products to all countries which forbid their import, has been held over pending the ratification of the recommendations of the Hague Conference.

10. I am to add, with reference to paragraph 4 of your letter dated the 4th February 1911, that the Government of India approve of the reduction of the limit of private possession of opium smoking preparations from one tola to half a tola, and I am to invite attention in this connection to the remarks in paragraph 5 of the Resolution. [To be sent as paragraph 10 to the United Provinces.]

10. With regard to the draft notification enclosed in your letter of the 8th August 1910, I am to say that the Government of India approve of the reduction of the limit of possession of opium smoking preparations for any one individual from one tola to half a tola. I am to suggest, however, that the notification be amended so as to embody the further principle mentioned in paragraph 5 of the the Resolution, by which the limit of collective possession for two individuals will be fixed at one tola, with the proviso that where two persons are found to be in possession of more than one tola, each of them will be deemed to have exceeded the legal limit. [To be sent as paragraph 10 to the Punjab.]

10. I am further to explain that the result of the measures now proposed will be that in Burma opium smoking *in company* will be prohibited for all persons whether Burmans or non-Burmans, including the registered Burmans in Lower Burma. These registered Burmans, however, and, of course, non-Burmans, will not in any way be interfered with in regard to solitary opium smoking or such smoking by two individuals together. This, it is considered, will amply safeguard the interest of registered opium smokers, and meet the difficulty referred to in paragraph 7 of Mr. Arnold's letter. The sale of *beinchi* and *beinsi* should be prohibited, and smokers in Burma will have to manufacture their own opium smoking preparations, in the same way that Indian smokers have to manufacture their own *chandu* or *madak*. [To be sent as paragraphs 10-14 to Burma.]

11. The Government of India will be glad to receive proposals about the reduction of the limit of private possession of opium smoking preparations, in the light of the remarks in paragraph 5 of the Resolution.

12. With regard to the question of official vend, I am to say that the Government of India have decided that it is undesirable to make any alteration in the arrangements at present in force in Burma. They consider that the checks provided by the existing system of Resident Excise Officers are sufficiently stringent, and they are not prepared to eliminate the licensed vendors and take over the retail trade entirely into their own hands.

13. The Government of India are satisfied that the issue prices of opium in Burma, on which the retail prices depend, are sufficiently high at present. But they would be glad if the general principles governing the fixation of issue prices are examined in Burma as in the rest of India, and a report furnished in the light of paragraphs 3 to 7 above.

14. The question of rendering effective a prohibition under section 19 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878, of the export of opium, its derivatives and bye-products to all countries which forbid their import, has been held over pending the ratification of the recommendations of the Hague Conference.

10. I am to add that the Government of India note that the question of enhancing the issue price of opium was engaging the attention of the Board of Revenue of the late province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. They trust that the question will not be lost sight of. They will also be glad if you will consider the desirability of reducing the limit of private possession of opium from five tolas to three tolas. A similar reduction is being carried out in Bengal. [To be sent as paragraph 10 to Assam.]

10. The issue price of opium in the Central Provinces and Berar has been raised from Rs. 26 to Rs. 27-8 as sanctioned in Sir James Meston's telegram, dated the 13th January 1912. As regards the limit of private possession of [To be sent as paragraph 10 to Central Provinces.]

opium, the Honourable the Chief Commissioner is of opinion that the present limit of 3 tolas is too high, and I am to convey the sanction of the Government of India to the reduction of the limit from three tolas to two tolas for the whole of the Central Provinces and Berar.

[To be sent as paragraph 10 to North-West Frontier Province.]

10. With reference to paragraph 4 of your letter No. 85-C., dated the 17th March 1910, and to paragraph 3 of your letter No. 878-Exc., dated the 8th October 1910, I am to refer to the letter from this Department, No. 1490-Exc. dated the 23rd March 1910, and telegram No. 906-F.E., dated the 13th February 1911, in which sanction was accorded to an increase in the excise preventive establishment of the province and to the raising of the issue price of opium from Rs. 17 to Rs. 18 a seer.

[To be sent as paragraphs 10-11 to Ajmer-Merwara].

10. With reference to paragraph 3 of your letter No. 504-589-VIII, of the 22nd April 1910, I am to invite particular attention to the remarks in paragraph 7 above, and to suggest that the question may be further considered in the light of the general principles indicated in this letter.

11. In paragraph 3 of your letter No. 1364-589-VIII, dated the 17th September 1910, you mention three measures suggested by the Commissioner for the further control of opium, but you do not recommend any of those measures on account of the conditions prevailing in the surrounding States of Rajputana. The Government of India fully recognise the difficulties which you mention, but they are inclined to think that the reduction of the limit of private possession of opium from five tolas to three tolas, and a reduction in the numberof retail shops in British territory from 42 to some lower number to be determined by you, will, while causing very little disturbance to Rajput sentiment, go some way towards controlling the opium habit indirectly. The modification of rule 18 (1) of the Opium Rules, as suggested by the Commissioner, will be necessary to prevent smuggling. I am to point out that the general limit of private possession elsewhere in British India is three tolas, while in some provinces it is considerably lower. The Government of India consider that unless there are very special circumstances five tolas is too high a limit, and I am to request that you will give the matter further consideration.

[To be sent as paragraph 10 to Coorg.]

10. I am to add that the Government of India approve of your action in raising the issue price of opium from four annas to five annas a tola, with effect from the 1st April 1910. The present price is, therefore, Rs. 25 per seer. They will be glad to hear of any further action in that direction in consequence of the experience gained in 1910-11.

[To be sent as paragraph 10 to Baluchistan.]

10. With reference to the last sentence of the Revenue Commissioner's letter to you, dated the 6th April 1910, enclosed in your letter under reply, I am to enquire if the question of the raising of the issue price of opium has again been considered, and with what result. I am to invite particular attention to paragraph 9 of this letter.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

H. F. HOWARD,

Officiating Secretary to the Government of India.

Copy with a copy of the Resolution referred to forwarded to the Foreign Department.